Your Home for Sale: What is Your Buyer's First Impression?

One thing is always true - you never get a second chance to make a first impression. That's why the first impression your buyer has of your home is critical to how the whole transaction goes, or even if a transaction will take place.

What's the first impression your buyer has of your home? Is it inviting? In good repair? Clean? Attractive?

Buyers tend to judge homes by cost and "move-in" quality - the less they have to do to move-in, the better and the more they are willing to pay. A home that looks like a lot of work will cause the buyer to make a lower offer or none at all.

What can you do to assure that your home makes the best first impression?

- Polish the front door knob, wash the glass/door and sweep front step area
- Clear away any debris or clutter from front door, inside and outside area to make entry to home seem more spacious and to allow freedom of movement for more than one person.
- Open windows daily for a few minutes to exchange stale air and/or cooking odors, mildew/moisture from hot showers and laundry.
- Switch low-watt bulbs to high-watt bulbs while selling, and turn all lights on (even for daytime viewings).
- If you are at work during the day, leave a radio on and turn on a couple of lights to make your home even more inviting.
- If you've had stale odors in the basement, due to rooms being closed over long periods, strategically locate an open bag of real charcoal, or large bags of baking soda, to absorb smells and help keep the air fresh.
- Wipe clean all kitchen doors on cabinets, then wipe an oil-soaked cloth over real wood to freshen appearance.
- Empty kitty litter trays "daily" while selling your home. Buyers find full trays very offensive.
- Pack anything you won't use between now and moving day. Store boxes out of the way of traffic areas.
- Rearrange furniture so as to make rooms look more spacious, and to create areas that are easy to pass without knocking over ornaments, etc.
- Open dark drapes or blinds to lighten and brighten rooms.
- Replace washers in drippy taps.
- Play nice dinner music so buyers feel free to speak without being overheard.
- Be pleasant but don't volunteer information unless the agent asks for your help. Agents don't like to be followed about while showing your home.
- Make a list, for your own agent, of all the reasons this home appealed to you when you bought it. This will be a helpful tool when re-selling it, possibly
- Some people are allergic to pets or are frightened of pets. Keep your pets outside, or in a sectioned off area while guests are viewing. Besides, pets are valuable family members, too, and we would want Rover to get away on us.
- If you have unusual pets, eg. lizards, ferrets, snakes, pet rats, etc. board them out or get a pet sitter (at grandma's?) until your home is sold. Most agents (or buyers) are terrified and will not show your home a second time. As, well word spreads like wildfire throughout the real estate community, to stay away.
- Keep perfumes, air fresheners and smoke to a minimum, as many people, today, have life-threatening allergies.
- Keep kitchen sparkling clean - and counters free of medications, pill bottles, and anything that small children could accidentally get their hands on while visiting during the time their parents are in your home. (safety first)
- Valuables such as jewelry, money, Doulton figurines - should be kept out of easy reach or put away completely while selling your home; also, collectibles such as weapons, guns, knives or anything that may be dangerous.

An agent should be present at all showings. Do not invite complete strangers into your home. Just because your home is on the market, it is not an open-door invitation to the public to arrive unannounced. Call your agent.

Now after doing all that, pretend you are a buyer and that you have never seen your home before. Would you buy? Why not? If you have any why not's left, take the time to fix them.